

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KUALA 06788 01 OF 02 101022Z

ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 NSAE-00 H-01 INR-05 PM-03

PA-01 SP-02 EB-04 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 /036 W

-----071393 101049Z /21

P 100945Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6058

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

USLO PEKING PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 6788

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PORG, ASEAN, VM, UR, MY

SUBJECT: VIETNAM'S SOUTHEAST ASIA PEACE ZONE PROPOSAL

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 6717 (NOTAL) DTG 070920Z JUL 78

1. NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSIONER SHEPHERD HAS  
LEARNED FROM SENIOR MFA SOURCES HERE THAT WITHIN  
THE PAST FEW DAYS THE SRV AMBASSADOR HAS FORMALLY  
PROPOSED TO MFA DISCUSSIONS WITH ASEAN "WITHIN THE  
NEXT MONTH OR SO" ON VIETNAM'S PROPOSAL FOR A SOUTH-  
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PAGE 02 KUALA 06788 01 OF 02 101022Z

EAST ASIAN ZONE OF PEACE, INDEPENDENCE AND  
NEUTRALITY (ZOPIAN). MFA'S INITIAL RESPONSE WAS TO  
SAY THAT IT WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT ITS ASEAN PARTNERS  
BEFORE IT COULD AGREE TO TALKS WITH THE SRV. MFA  
ALSO SOUGHT CLARIFICATION OF THE SRV'S MOTIVES IN  
JOINING COMECON, POINTING OUT THAT THIS MOVE HAS  
CALLED INTO QUESTION THE SRV'S CLAIM TO NON-ALIGNMENT

AND THUS ITS SEA PEACE-ZONE PROPOSAL. THE SRV AMBASSADOR HOTLY DENIED THAT THE SRV'S MEMBERSHIP IN COMECON DETRACTED FROM IT'S "INDEPENDENT" FOREIGN POLICY, SAYING THAT IT HAD JOINED COMECON SOLELY TO OBTAIN INCREASED ECONOMIC BENEFITS FROM EASTERN EUROPE. THE SRV AMBASSADOR ALSO TRIED TO DRAW A PARALLEL BETWEEN ITS MEMBERSHIP IN COMECON AND ASEAN'S DIALOGUE WITH THE EEC, IMPLYING AT LEAST THAT THIS WOULD FACILITATE ASEAN-SRV PEACE-ZONE DISCUSSIONS.

2. ACCORDING TO SHEPHERD'S INFORMATION, MFA ALSO QUERIED THE SRV AMBASSADOR ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ASEAN'S ZOPFAN PROPOSAL, WITH ITS USE OF THE TERM "FREEDOM", AND THE SRV'S "ZOPIAN" PROPOSAL, WITH ITS USE OF THE TERM "INDEPENDENCE", PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THE SRV'S MEMBERSHIP IN COMECON. MFA ALSO APPARENTLY NOTED THAT IN PAST SRV PARLANCE "INDEPENDENCE" WAS USUALLY DIRECTED AGAINST FOREIGN BASES. THE SRV AMBASSADOR ONCE AGAIN STOUTLY DEFENDED THE SRV'S INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY AND MINIMIZED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "FREEDOM" AND "INDEPENDENCE", SAYING THESE COULD BE MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION. REGARDING THE BASE ISSUE, THE SRV AMBASSADOR REPORTEDLY DREW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE AUSTRALIAN BASE AT BUTTERWORTH HERE IN MALAYSIA, WHICH WAS AIMED AT "INTERNAL DEFENSE", AND BASES

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 KUALA 06788 01 OF 02 101022Z

WHICH HAD "AGGRESSIVE" INTENT (E.G., IN PHILIPPINES?)

3. THE SRV AMBASSADOR THEN REPORTEDLY PROPOSED, AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO EARLY SRV-ASEAN DISCUSSIONS, BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS OF THE SRV PROPOSAL BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND THE SRV. ACCORDING TO SHEPHERD'S MFA SOURCE, MFA AGREED THAT BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE POSSIBLE, SUBJECT TO MALAYSIA CHECKING WITH ITS ASEAN PARTNERS FIRST AND TO KEEPING THEM INFORMED ON SUCH DISCUSSIONS.

4. ALSO, ACCORDING TO SHEPHERD, THE NEW SOVIET AMBASSADOR BORIS KULICK, IS PUSHING THE IDEA WITH THE MFA HERE OF A FORMAL ASEAN-COMECON DIALOGUE A LA ASEAN'S DIALOGUES WITH THE EEC, US, ETC. INTERESTINGLY, DURING HIS INITIAL CALL ON ME JULY 6, IN RESPONSE TO MY SPECIFIC QUERY FOR HIS VIEWS ON A POSSIBL DIALOGUE BETWEEN ASEAN AND EASTERN EUROPE, KULIC APPEARED TO DISMISS THE IDEA AS A VAGUE POSSIBILITY

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PAGE 01 KUALA 06788 02 OF 02 101035Z  
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P R 100945Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6059  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY  
SULO PEKING PRIORITY 240  
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORIT  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORIT

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 2 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 6788

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FOR THE FUTURE. SHEPHERD SAYS HE HAS PRESSED KULICK  
ON WHETHER THE USSR AND THE SRV ENVISAGE CAMBODIA AS  
A PARTICIPANT IN ZOPAN, BUT HAS NOT GOTTEN A  
CLEAR RESPONSE.

5. A SINGAPORE DIPLOMAT ALSO CONFIRMED MUCH OF  
THE ABOVE RECENTLY; HE TOLD US THAT THE SRV AMBASSADOR  
TO K.L. RETURNED EARLY FROM LEAVE IN HANOI ON JULY 1  
TO BRING THIS MESSAGE TO THE GOM. THE SINGAPORE  
DIPLOMAT SAID THAT HE WAS CALLED IN BY MFA TO DISCUSS  
THE SUBJECT. THE SINGAPOREAN SAID THAT THE SRV  
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PAGE 02 KUALA 06788 02 OF 02 101035Z

UN REP WHO ANNOUNCED ZOPAN AT THE DINNER FOR  
ASEAN FEPS LAST MONTH ALSO OFFERED TO SEND SOMEONE

TO THE PATTAYA ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING TO EXPLAIN THE CONCEPT; HOWEVER, THERE WERE ONLY TWO DAYS LEFT IN THE PATTAYA MEETING, SO ASEAN DECLINED THE OFFER. PRESUMABLY THE RECALL OF SRV AMBASSADOR'S IN SEA LAST MONTH WAS A PART OF A CAREFULLY PREPARED SCENARIO TO INTRODUCE ZOPHAN.

6. COMMENT: THE ABOVE AND REFTEL WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE SRV WITH STRONG SOVIET BACKING HAS ENTERED ON A SPECIFIC CAMPAIGN WITH ASEAN FOR ITS PEACE-ZONE PROPOSAL, AND THAT POSSIBLY IT SEES MALAYSIA AS THE ASEAN PARTNER MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO ITS OVERTURES. MALAYSIA APPEARS READY TO RESPOND POSITIVELY AT LEAST TO A REQUEST FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SRV ON ZOPHAN. AT THE SAME TIME IT APPEARS TO BE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED AT BOTH THE SRV'S MOTIVES IN JOINING COMECON AND THE TIMING OF THE MOVE IN RELATION TO ITS PEACE-ZONE PROPOSAL, SUSPECTING THAT POLITICAL MOTIVES DIRECTED AGAINST THE PRC ARE MORE INVOLVED THAN ECONOMIC NEEDS. AS PERHAPS NON-ALIGNED ASEAN'S MOST NON-ALIGNED MEMBER, MALAYSIA NEVERTHELESS REMAINS DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF THE SOVIET UNION, AND THEREFORE WARY OF THE SOVIET ROLE IN PUSHING ZOPHAN, AND IT WILL HAVE TO TREAD CAREFULLY TO AVOID PLACING AT RISK ITS GOOD RELATIONS WITH CAMBODIA AND THE PRC, TO SAY NOTHING OF PLACING SOME STRAIN ON ASEAN SOLIDARITY.

7. FROM OUR STANDPOINT HERE, WE TOO FIND CURIOUS THE COINCIDENCE BETWEEN HANOI'S COMECON MEMBERSHIP AND ITS PEACE-ZONE PROPOSAL. WE SHARE OUR NEW  
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PAGE 03 KUALA 06788 02 OF 02 101035Z

ZEALAND COLLEAGUE'S SKEPTICISM THAT VIETNAM CAN GET MORE AID THROUGH MEMBERSHIP IN COMECON THAN IT DID BEFORE.

8. AND OF COURSE THE SRV AMBASSADOR'S ATTEMPT TO DRAW A PARALLEL BETWEEN THIS AND ASEAN'S DIALOGUE WITH THE EEC IS COMPLETELY SPECIOUS, SINCE ASEAN IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE EEC. WE ALSO FIND TROUBLING THE OPEN SOVIET BACKING OF THE SRV PEACE-ZONE PROPOSAL, WHEN ADDED TO COMECON ISSUE, TO THE PHILIPPINE BASE ISSUE, AND TO THE CURRENT INTENSE HOSTILITY BETWEEN THE SRV AND THE USSR ON THE ONE HAND AND THE PRC AND CAMBODIA ON THE OTHER. WE CANNOT ESCAPE FEELING THAT THE SOVIETS AND VIETNAM MAY BE MAKING A BALD BID TO EMBROIL THE ASEAN PARTNERS, EITHER TOGETHER OR SINGLY, IN THEIR STRUGGLES AGAINST THE PRC (AND CAMBODIA) BEFORE

ASEAN COHESION AND ECONOMIC STRENGTH ADVANCE TOO FAR. AT THE VERY LEAST MOSCOW AND HANOI ARE TRYING TO NEUTRALIZE PRC INFLUENCE WITH ASEAN, AND WE FIND IT HARD TO CREDIT THEIR SUDDEN CHANGE OF HEART TOWARD ASEAN AS ANYTHING BUT TACTICAL AT THIS POINT. WE ARE ALSO MINDFUL THAT THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE ALL TAKING PLACE VIRTUALLY ON THE EVE OF THE US-ASEAN DIALOGUE IN EARLY AUGUST, AND WONDER WHETHER THEY ARE DESIGNED AT LEAST IN PART TO TEST THE US-ASEAN RELATIONSHIP IN SOME WAY.

MILLER

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## Message Attributes

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